

Dealing with Alcoholism

by Barb Grantham

"I was never myself before I got sober — I was my father's daughter, then my husband's wife, then my children's mother, but I was never me."

As a collective society, we have been relatively unaware of the problem some women face with alcohol or drugs — particularly tranquilizers. For example, when most of us are asked to picture an alcoholic, we envision a man, often a "down 'n out" man on skid road.

The truth, upon examination, reveals that anyone can have a problem with alcohol and/or drugs — regardless of their age, social status or sex. In recent years, the percentage of women using drugs and alcohol has increased dramatically — and the frequency increases with education. Conversely, with more women drinking, more women have developed drinking problems. In addition, many women feeling the pressures of combining a family and school/work outside the home are being given tranquilizers (such as valium) to cope with the problems in their lives; in fact, women are given twice as many prescriptions. As a result, many women have become addicted to these drugs, often in combination with alcohol.

"There is something about surviving alcoholism that is very liberating. When you get to the point of totally accepting your alcoholism — and all the things that happened because of it — it gives you tremendous freedom. You realize you can accept and handle anything after this."

Although women are just as likely to have a problem of substance abuse as men, many of the prevalent attitudes in society prevent women from admitting the problem. Society's tolerance level for alcoholic women are vastly different than what it imposes upon men. As a result, many women try to hide their problem; they are desperately afraid to seek help. Sometimes women will try to treat the symptoms, such as anxiety or depression, rather than facing the real problem. Therefore, it is necessary for us to create the conditions where women can admit having a dependency problem and can seek help without losing respect or status in the workplace or at home.

If your use of alcohol or drugs (or that of someone you know) results in damage to you or those around you, then it is a problem. Facing a problem can be difficult, but fortunately expert confidential help is available here in Victoria. Each of the services listed below employs women who are experienced in helping other women with problems related to drug and alcohol abuse. You can either call for an appointment, with a woman counsellor if you prefer, or just to visit or request more information.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAM
(Out Patient Counselling Service)
387-5077
- outpatient individual, group and family counselling for people with alcohol and drug problems, or family members.
- offers a women's group for women with alcohol and drug problems.



DALLAS HOUSE TREATMENT CENTRE
383-8011

- 28 day residential treatment for people with alcohol and drug problems.
- encourages women to enter the program.
- willing to accept women who live in Victoria for day treatment (non-residential).

VICTORIA LIFE ENRICHMENT SOCIETY
381-4343

- 28 day residential treatment program for women and men.
- provides a service sensitive to the needs of women.
- will make day treatment available to women who live in the vicinity of Victoria, when need is assessed.

VICTORIA DETOX CENTRE
592-5554

- short-term residence (3-5 days) for people in withdrawal from alcohol or drugs.
- reserves one room (3 beds) for women.
- a woman counsellor is on duty 24 hours a day.

SALVATION ARMY
384-3396

- women are encouraged to enter in the 28 day (minimum) residential program.
- rehabilitation and counselling also available to women in a 3-month (minimum) residential or day program.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
383-3553

- self-help for people with drug problems.
- 24-hour answering service.
- women available to respond to women's enquiries.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
383-0415

- self-help for alcoholics.
- 24-hour answering service.
- some meetings for women only.

Of course, there are still many treatment needs for women that have not been adequately addressed. For example, of the nearly 400 drug treatment facilities in Canada, less than 10 provide child care as part of regular programs. Many women feel that job training is needed in treatment programs; few centers offer services of this nature. However, the situation is improving because women working in the addictions field are realizing that women have very different treatment needs than those of men. Women suffering from an addictions problem are now finding treatments that make them stronger, happier and more self-aware. Regardless of the kind of help a woman may choose, the aim will be to help promote better understanding and acceptance of herself. She may make major changes to her life, make decisions that respond to her needs, and help deal with problems in a healthier, more realistic way.

"When I started recovering, I realized I had a whole new life. It was the most gangbuster's feeling I've ever had. It was like somebody said, 'Boy, you really screwed that life up, but here's a brand new one for you.'"

*Note: portions of this article are taken from a pamphlet published by "Women of Addictions", a group of women who work in the field of addictions in Victoria.

Margaret Randall Visits Victoria

by Maeve Lydon

Once an upper-class American, now a Latin-American revolutionary, Margaret Randall is a poet, writer, feminist, Marxist.

In her writings on women and revolution in Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua, Randall defines the relationship between women's liberation and socialism. Rather than analyzing situations abstractly, Randall chooses to judge the revolution by the impact it has on people's lives, in particular the lives of women.



Rejecting the middle America, Puritan, work ethic, Randall moved to New York city in her early twenties. Partially this move was an attempt to escape an oppressive first marriage. She soon became involved in the avant garde culture and political groups, such as the Beatniks, the Black Mountain poets and leftists liberals.

Her political consciousness grew out of a disgust with what she considered to be the brutality and moral bankruptcy of the American "upward-mobility machine". She involved herself in the Ban the Bomb, Hands off Cuba political movements and became disillusioned by the smugness and decadence of her New York friends.

In 1961 Margaret decided to move to Mexico with her first child. It was here that she came in touch with Latin American revolution and art. She co-founded a magazine

called "El Corno" which combined progressive literature and poetry from Latin America and the U.S.

It was in Mexico that she first tasted direct political repression. On October 2, 1968, 400 people attending a peaceful demonstration associated with the Mexican student movement, were killed by the U.S. trained Olympia Brigade of the Mexican Army. One year later Margaret was forced to go underground because of police surveillance of her activities.

She and her companion then moved to Cuba. Soon after her arrival she began to devote herself to writing.

Among her many works are CUBAN WOMEN NOW and SANDINO'S DAUGHTERS. The first is the result of eight months of travelling and interviewing women all over Cuba. The latter is the compiled testimonies of a cross-section of Nicaraguan women who discuss their participation in recreating a new Nicaragua. A consistent thread runs through Randall's works; women integrating their liberation with the more general struggle of people fighting against oppression.

This fall Margaret Randall will be on her first Canadian tour sponsored by Canadian Action for Nicaragua. In Victoria the International Women's Day Committee and the Central American Support Committee are organizing her visit scheduled for October 14...

Giving Birth: From Then to Now



by megan davies

The birth of a child means the beginning of a new life — both for the child that is brought into the world and for the parents who welcome the newborn infant.

Yet, ironically, few of our parents were fortunate enough to witness our grand entrance into life. Our fathers were banished to pace across the linoleum tiles of the waiting room floor while most of our mothers dozed in drug induced confusion.

The majority of us were forceps babies — under the influence of Demerol our mothers could not feel their way past their pain to push us into the world. That was childbirth in the 1950's.

Childbirth has an interesting history. Feminist analysis holds that the growth of the scientific medical professions in childbirth allowed a male dominated profession to gain power over an area that was traditionally the domain of women. Prior to the nineteenth century women gave birth in their homes, aided by midwives who used herbal remedies to assist their patients. Early advocates of professional medicine championed their services as

scientific and condemned the community of women healers as heretics. However, there is evidence that a much greater number of women died in childbirth in the hands of the growing medical profession than did under the care of midwives and herbalists.

A medical system which alienated women from the experience of childbirth remained unchallenged in North America until the 1960's. Women were ill-informed as to what actually happened to their bodies during labour so their response was usually panicked fear. Women in labour were virtually knocked out with Demerol and thus remembered little of the birth experience.

Above all, it was the male doctor who was in charge, his word was unquestioned.

In keeping with the more radical spirit of the era the 1960's witnessed the beginning of a new trend in childbirth. Majorie Carmel's book, *Thankyou Dr. Lamanze*, introduced North America to a new philosophy of childbirth. Dr. Lamanze, a French obstetrician, maintains that women in labour can learn to deal with their uterine contractions by employing relaxation and

breathing techniques. In this manner women remain conscious throughout labour and experience less pain. The supportive presence of a partner or labour coach, often the father of the child, is an important part of the Lamanze method.

During the 1970's yet another French proponent of alternative childbirth emerged. Leboyer's creed is "childbirth without violence", by which he means soft lights and a quiet delivery room. A "Leboyer baby" is welcomed into the world with the gentlest of care and placed in water in an attempt to duplicate the mother's womb environment. The Leboyer method has gained widespread recognition in North America through extensive media coverage and is popular with many women, yet the majority of doctors remain sceptical.

Midwifery and home birth have also enjoyed a renaissance since the 1960's. In the United States, homebirths have become an economical as well as philosophical measure with hospital births now costing approximately \$1500. Some states, including Washington, have legalized the profession of midwifery.

In Canada, both midwifery and homebirths are still illegal; doctors who attend home births can be held liable and therefore most prefer hospital births. However, in spite of the legalities involved, home deliveries do take place here in Canada.

Birthing clinics have also become an alternative method of childbirth — an option that provides a compromise between hospital and home. The Birth

Centre, located in Seattle, Washington, is one such establishment. This birthing centre, an old house, is attractively decorated to create a homelike and personal atmosphere.

The group of nurses, midwives and doctors that operate the centre downplay medical aspects of childbirth — all medical equipment is hidden from view. Yet response to a medical complication is swift; emergencies are immediately transferred to the hospital.

The birthing centre also provides prenatal classes for prospective parents. Apparently the centre's efforts to provide a warm familial atmosphere is genuine; their birthing chair was made from an old cherry tree by a grateful father.

Childbirth research over the past decade has challenged the medical assumption that the best position for a woman in labour is on her back. A study done by Dr. Caldero Barcia, a Brazilian, notes that labour is an average of four hours shorter for women who remain upward and mobile throughout labour.

Recent birthing programs have used Dr. Caldero Barcia's hypothesis to advocate more radical birthing methods. The Active Birth Movement, run by the Radical Midwives Association of England, maintains that the current patriarchal medical profession robs women of the birth experience. Chanting the slogan "never surrender to your physician!" and gyrating with each contraction, they teach these women to remain upright and active throughout their labour.

Dr. Michel Odont is yet another Frenchman who has different ideas about childbirth. Odont teaches expectant mothers to sing, theorizing that the harmonious melody is good for the baby and also helps the woman relax during labour.

In Victoria, birthing procedures at our local hospitals have recently been in a state of flux. Since

April 17th all births have taken place at the new Victoria General North Hospital.

The obstetrics ward at the new hospital puts into practice some of the birthing techniques that have evolved during the past two decades. Barbara Owen, new head nurse of the labour and delivery room at Victoria General North stated, "the birthing concept at the new hospital is family centered — as in both other hospitals; parents wishes are respected as far as limitations concerning the safety of mother and child allow." In accordance with this philosophy the entire family is permitted to be present during the labour.

Victoria General North's obstetrics ward also accommodates women who choose to remain upright and active throughout their labour. The beds adapt to any position, allowing women to give birth in a sitting position if they choose. Lounges with televisions allow women to relax in a more homelike surrounding during their labour.

The new hospital does away with the idea of separating labour and delivery rooms. Instead, women in labour remain in one room throughout both labour and delivery. The labour/delivery rooms and Victoria General North provide a homelike setting with comfortable, wooden furniture. All medical equipment is hidden from view.

Post partum care at the Victoria General North also stresses the familial concept; mother and baby are together as much as possible during their stay at the hospital. As well, the fathers are welcome to visit at any time of the day or night.

It is indeed a changed world confronting today's expectant mother. As women, when and if we decide to bear children, we will have a new set of options to consider. We will operate from a position of knowledge and confidence radically different from that of our mothers.

Women Collective Meeting

- Thursday -

— 1:30 p.m. —

(THE EMILY) QUOTE:

"What I know I share with all women is the potential courage to speak for myself and the capacity to listen, to bear and be witness. I can serve no one's life experience and imagination but my own. To deny its value is to squander the gift I have." Jane Rule

Women who worked on this issue:

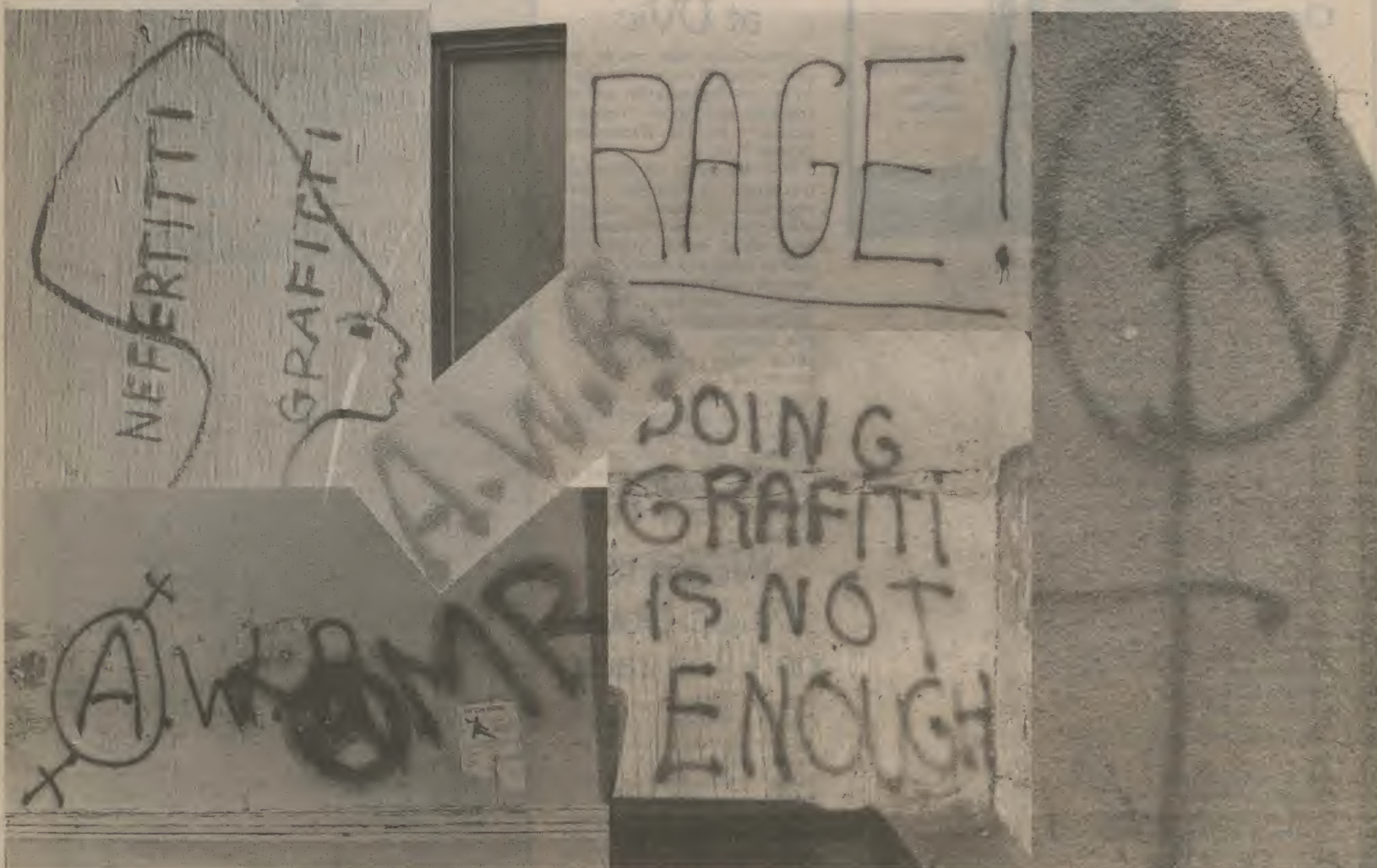
Olive Mann, Margot Harrison, Nora Ready, Marilee Nugent, Michelle Eshom, Suzy Coulter, Sage Moore, Leslie Bullard, Barb Grantham, Katy Chan, Maeve Lydon, Ellen Saenger, Sadie Whitemoon, Brenda Percy, Megan Davies.

The Emily is published by the Women's Collective of the University of Victoria. The opinions expressed in these pages are the sole responsibility of The Emily and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Alma Mater Society, the University of Victoria or...The Martlet. Editorial and business offices are located at the Women's Centre, Student Union Building. Correspondence should be addressed to The Emily, Women's Centre, SUB, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700, Victoria, B.C., V8W 2Y2. You can call us at 721-8353 for advertising.



Expression of Women—

Writing on the Wall



Photos by Ellen Saenger

• Women's Words •

Rhythm an' Hardtimes

by Nora Ready

Lillian Allen calls herself a folk poet. Her works focus on a specific community and draw on everyday events. She comes from the West Indian community in Toronto. At the Vancouver Women and Words conference her readings were smash hits.

Allen is a small, plump, Jamaican woman. She moves to her poetry. The dub poetry (a type of rhythmic verse in the Jamaican language) was probably difficult for much of the audience to understand. But there really is no experience necessary as far as listening to dub goes. The music of the words would be understandable to anyone.

Perhaps one of the most delightful poems Allen performed at the conference was one documenting her own child labour experience. She had the entire all female audience rooting at a recreation of the birth of Allen's daughter, Coura Anta. "An' me labour, an' me labour, an' me labour...an' BOP, she comes."

RHYTHM AN' HARD TIMES is a small book of poetry, a mixture of love poems, dub

poetry and poems that are direct social statements. *The Immigrant*, talks about the alienation and despair that drive a recent immigrant to suicide. In *I Fight Back*, Allen chronicles the stigma attached to being a new Canadian.

*They label me Immigrant,
Law-breaker, Illegal
Ah No, Not Mother, Not
Worker, Not Fighter...*

*I Scrub Floors
Serve Backra's Meals on
Time
Spend two days working
in one
And Twelve Days In a
Week*

"My work is definitely not meant to lay still on the written page but to be performed," says Allen. Although this is true of her dub style work, a lot of her other poems work very well "on the written page."

Probably one of the poems that works best on the page is *Lalumba*. The rift between men and women in Allen's black community is the subject of the poem. Allen doesn't take a reactionary stance, instead she is open about the pain the rift causes

and tries to define reasons for it without assigning blame.

*My feet move to the
drums of Angela,
Malcolm, Tubman,
Turner, Fidel and the
many others.*

*I panic, Lalumba, when I
think of the times I've
danced to the music of
fakers, posers and
pimps.*

*Have danced pleasures
into pain, and pain into a
barrack*

*That have furnished me
with yet another mask
To hide the fact, that I
can feel and, have felt
pain and hurting.*

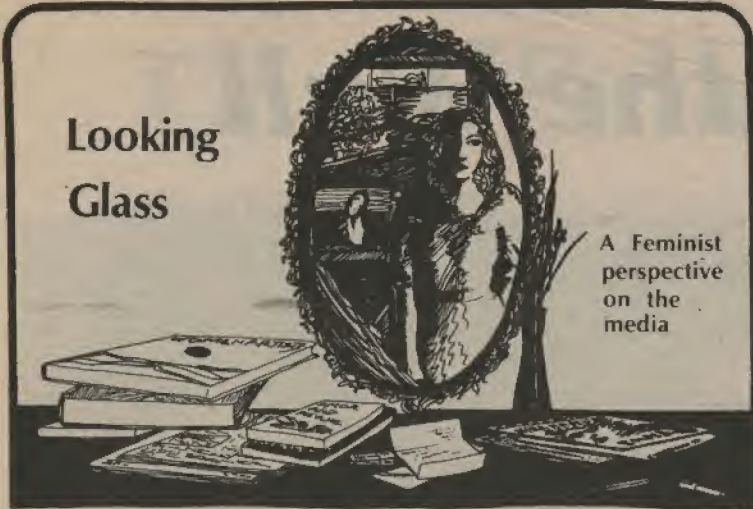
Allen's book is published by Domestic Bliss publishers. For copies of the book you can write to 185 Chambers Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6N 3M5.

To see Lillian Allen in person is an experience not to be missed. It's not often I've been moved to dance at a poetry reading. With Allen it was hard to remain seated. Seeing her live is the best way to experience Allen's poetry, but reading RHYTHM AN' HARD TIMES, is a close second.

by Lillian Allen



Looking Glass



by S. Whitemoon and Brenda Percy

*You were there—were you not?
at the moment when the goddess was
thrust into the dark
now who will strike with a cool palm
above the cleft rock?
Who will summon the goddess from the dark
(stretch muscles, and even bones crack
with pushing and birthing and
will the goddess come?)*

*Who will call the goddess, from the dark
conjure from bones and splinters
of broken rock
shards of grey rock and spirit
only
no fire to call with any more
only touch to the cleft rock
only
bare hands and longing
(if enough gold is weighed and measured
enough stars broken into
thin, sharp, ice-silver pieces
will the goddess come?)*

*Who will place ear to the rock
and listen
how many hundreds of years
for the goddess heartbeat?
On any cold fields of stars her name
will be written in the horned scorpion moon
Who will know which space?
What moment? Will the goddess come?
Who is left to catch the golden apples now?*

Only one.

This poem came to me unbidden, two years ago—only later did I understand the meaning.

Sadie

I met Her once in my herb garden. I playfully thought to invoke Her and She came in the form of Her consort, the Horned One, a stag. I fled before I realized that my call had been answered. She laughed.

The Goddess is alive and well and living among and within us. She responds enthusiastically to our slightest inner call. She laughs with us and cries with us and watches over our faltering steps toward Her.

Feminism lately has been recognizing and articulating this spiritual core. Every step we've taken toward exposing the inherent lie behind oppression has enabled us to look up and see Her face as a reflection of our own power and beauty. The more we look for Her the more She is there to be found. Have you seen Her? Who is She to you? What is Her nature? Where do you feel Her presence the most?

Please share your experiences of the Goddess with c/o THE LOOKING GLASS.

Some Suggested Reading:

- ANCIENT MIRRORS OF WOMANHOOD, Vol 1 and 2 by Merlin Stone (available in the Women's Centre library)
- THE FEMININE—SPACIOUS AS THE SKY by Jose and Miriam Arguelles
- MOTHERPEACE: A WAY TO THE GODDESS THROUGH MYTH ART AND TAROT by Vicki Noble

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...speaking of the goddess, Nina Hagen has just released a new album which will be reviewed in the next "Emily".

Marie-Claire Blais speaks at UVic

Marie-Claire Blais, one of the most important French Canadian writers of her generation, will be speaking at UVic on Tuesday, October 11th and Wednesday October 12th.

Since the age of 19, when her first novel "La Belle Bete" won international critical acclaim, Marie-Claire has written several texts which include novels as well as plays and poetry. She is probably most widely known for her book "Une Saison Dans La Vie D'Emmanuel", which won Le Prix Medecis in 1966 and has since been adapted as a screenplay.

Marie-Claire's work is written from a feminist perspective and has been translated into English as well as other languages.

Her first talk will be given in French and the second in English. Mark it on your calendar!

Women's Music Hour on UVic radio

Good news for bored ears! On Tuesdays between 7:00-8:00 pm, UVic's radio station, CFUV, will be having a women's music hour. The show hopes to provide alternative music for the feminist community. Well known artists such as Ferron, Joan Armatrading, Holly Near and Marianne Faithfull will no doubt be featured but Heather McKay, initiator of the program, hopes to play lesser known women artists as well.

"We hope to give air play to women artists who don't get a lot of exposure," said McKay.

CFUV will be on the air sometime in January and hopefully will get approval from the CRTC to broadcast as a low power FM station next fall. Heather is interested in input for the program and can be contacted at the station office (2nd floor of the SUB).



Everywomans Books

641 Johnson Street
388-9411

Hours: 10:30 - 5:30
Monday - Saturday

Calynder

Thursday, October 6

Creative Energy Playshop

-encourages the release of creative energy through mime, clowning, sound poetry and performance art.

-fee: \$10

-place: East/West Lounge, SUB, UVic.

-time: 7-10 p.m.

-call UVic Women's Centre 721-8353, register early.

UVic Women's Rugby Club Dance

-place: Upper Lounge, SUB, UVic.

-call 477-8124 for more info.

Saturday, October 15

Health Action Network — panel discussion:

"Health For All In The '80s'.

-discussing conventional and alternate therapies

-place: Camosun College, Room F100, at 2 p.m.

Monday, October 17

Self-Defense For Women

-8 week course with Rowena Hunnisett dealing with physical and verbal self-defense.

-fee: \$50 employed/\$40 unemployed and students.

-place: Sundance Elementary School.

-time: Mondays, 7:00-9:30 p.m.

-call 384-2833, register early.

Thursday, October 22

Victoria Women's Network — October meeting

-all members and guests invited.

-fee: \$3

-place: Dingle House.

-time: 7:30 p.m.

-call 383-1023 for more info.

Tuesday, October 25

Prenatal Fitness

-6 week class in mild exercise with Felicity Hackett.

-fee: \$19 for 12 classes.

-place: 527 Fraser St.

-time: 9:30-10:15 a.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays.

-call 386-6128.

Friday, Saturday, October 28-29

Status of Women Action Group

11th Annual Fall Conference "Women and the Changing Family"

-20 workshops.

-fee: \$8.00.

-place: UVic., MacLaurin Bldg.

-call 381-1012, register early.

Saturday, Sunday, October 29-30

Celebration: Healing and Empowering Workshops for Women

-chance to release and reclaim blocked emotional energy in a supportive and nurturing environment.

-workshop leader: Sara Joy David.

-fee: sliding scale, \$35 minimum.

-place: 4041 Hollydene, Victoria.

-call 385-2954, register early.

We'd be happy to receive your Calynder information. The deadline for insertion into the next Emily is Friday, October 14.

The Victoria Women's Network invites you

to our October meeting
on Thursday, October 20, 7:30 p.m.
at the Dingle House,

137 Gorge Road East.

Speaker: Elizabeth Causton

of Divorce Lifeline.

Call Susan Sowden 383-1023 for info.

★ Next Emily

November 3

★ Deadline for copy

October 13